

# Illinois English Bulletin

Some of the Best Illinois  
High School Prose of 1960



ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF  
TEACHERS OF ENGLISH  
April, 1961



# ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN

Official Publication of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English

VOL. 48, No. 7

URBANA, ILLINOIS

APRIL, 1961

Published every month except June, July, August, and September. Subscription price, \$2.00 per year; single copies, 25 cents. *Entered as second-class matter October 29, 1941, at the post office at Urbana, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879.* Address all business communications to Harris Wilson, 109 English Building, Urbana, Illinois. Address manuscripts and other editorial communications to Wilmer A. Lamar, Editor, Stephen Decatur High School, Decatur, Illinois, or to Frank Moake, Co-Editor, 109 English Building, Urbana, Illinois. Member of the NCTE Information Agreement.

## Some of the Best Illinois High School Prose of 1960

Selected by Professors RUTH BUMP, CHARLES FRANK, and ETHEL SEYBOLD  
Department of English, Illinois College, Jacksonville, Illinois

The editors are grateful to Professors Bump, Frank, and Seybold for their discriminating work in choosing the compositions printed here.

Professor Seybold, writing for the committee, says:

Again, as last year, we thoroughly enjoyed reading the high school prose. We were impressed this year by the number of long narratives among the entries, and by the skillful techniques exhibited by the young writers in developing this type of material. Because we chose several of those for publication, we were unable to select as many items as usual. Again, as last year, we want to express to the high school English teachers of Illinois our admiration for the work they are doing and to the young writers who submitted entries, the pleasure we experienced in reading them.

Thirty years ago H. G. Paul wrote in the *Illinois English Bulletin*:

Having taught English composition for the last sixteen years, I realize that we teachers of it have on our hands a thirteenth labor of Hercules. Our task is to make literate the emerging masses in a democracy and to do so against the counteracting influences of home, playground, factory, and store. Christian pitted against Apollyon, or the Red Cross Knight pitted against the Cave of Error had no more formidable an opponent than we have.

The lot of the English teacher is no lighter now than when Dr. Paul wrote. We believe it is somewhat easier if the teacher can challenge her students by reading the writings of the better

students throughout the state. Teachers in the past have found the poetry and prose issues of the *Bulletin* most helpful. Additional copies of this *Bulletin* for student use are available at twenty-five cents each from Harris Wilson, 109 English Building, Urbana, Illinois.

### I'D PICK MORE DAISIES

If I had my life to live over, I'd try to make more mistakes. I would relax; I would be more frivolous than I have been this trip. I would not take life so seriously. I would go more places, climb more mountains, swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less bran. I would have more actual troubles and fewer imaginary ones.

I am a gal who lives prudently and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, but if I had it to do over again, I'd have more of them—a lot more. Of course, one can't unfry an egg, but there is no law against thinking about it. It may be too late to teach an old dog new tricks, but perhaps a word from the unwise will be of benefit to a coming generation. It may help them to fall into some of the pitfalls which I have avoided.

If I had my life to live over, I would pay less attention to those self-appointed teachers of tension. In this world of specialization, each specialist warns me about the seriousness of his specialty. Teachers tell me I must learn English or Latin or science or math.; otherwise I shall be disgraced, ruined, failed. After a dozen or so of these specialists have worked on my young mind, they have left hard knots for life. If I had my life to live over, I would seek out only those teachers who inspire relaxation and fun. Fortunately, I have had quite a few of them, and from them I have learned how to gather a few scraggy daisies along life's cindery pathway.

Yes, if I had my life to live over, I would start barefooted a little earlier in the spring and stay that way a little later in the fall. I would play hooky; I would keep later hours. I would be carefree as long as I could or at least until I had some real cares rather than imaginary ones.

Some day when I am old and gray, I'll look back over my life and wish that I had picked more daisies!

BETSY GIBBS, eleventh, East H. S., Rockford  
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

## AD ZOOKS!

That widely acclaimed hero of the Crusades, Commander Whitehead of the Bubbling Brigade, urged his gallant steed, Schweppervescence, onward. This brave knight from the Land of Sky Blue Waters, famous twice the world over, had been commissioned by the King to rescue all the damsels in distress in the land. So far today, he had destroyed several varied fiends which were bothering fair young damsels. He had attacked the Brooks Brothers, fiends in suited form; the Camel, a fiend in cylindrical form; Mr. Clean, a fiend in liquid form; and killed them dead—Black Flag dead.

Suddenly, from a distant castle came the harassed cries of a damsel in distress. In a flash Sir Whitehead adjusted his suit of armor, body by Fisher; slipped on his Gardol protective shield; readied his trusty sword with the Gillette hollow-ground blade and was off. Into the castle courtyard he galloped. There he found Lady Clairol, a fair maid, 99 44/100? pure, known far and wide for her beauty and natural-looking hair color. She was apparently quite frightened. Sir Whitehead addressed her comfortingly, "Never fear, Commander Whitehead is here to rescue thee from thy dire plight. The King cares enough to send the very best—me—to deliver the fair damsels of his realm."

"Oh, kind Sir Whitehead, please save me from the cruel, wicked spotted fiend which now inhabits my castle."

"Certainly, my dear," said Sir Whitehead, and he charged into the castle to confront the spotted fiend. He drew up in front of the beast, a truly horrible creature, flourished his sword, and drove him away with these words: "Out, damned spot!"

"Woof, Woof," said the spotted fiend on making his exit through a nearby Windex-clean window, for it was a fiend in canine form, called commonly a Dalmatian.

Sir Whitehead returned to Lady Clairol who was indeed grateful to him. "Tell me, darling," he said to her, "where did we meet? Was it Athens? Cairo? London?" She looks so flower-fresh, her skin so petal soft, her hair color so natural-looking, he thought. There's only one thing that bothers me—Does she, or doesn't she? He decided that he must have her for his own little wife and made his wishes known to the lovely Lady Clairol.

"Ah, Sir Knight, so young and fair and debonair, I should so like to move up to quality and become your Lady, but, alas, I am already promised to the influential Lord Tareyton."

"He shall not have thee—thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face, thy Playtex-molded figure. . . ."

"But, Sir Whitehead, do you not see on my finger the Tareyton ring—marks the real thing? Alas, I have so little pleasure with him."

"I shall double your pleasure, double your fun," exclaimed the Commander. "I challenge the blackguard to a tournament. We shall see who is noble enough to win the love of a fine lady."

"Oh, Sir Whitehead, thou art so irresistible."

"I know, my dear. It is because I dared to use two dabs of Brylcreem."

The day of the tournament arrived and the lists were filled. Everyone in the land was present to cheer Commander Whitehead on to victory. In his dressing tent, Lady Clairol was urging him to take care. "Don't be half safe, my dear," she said.

"Never fear, sweet lady. I'm a man who thinks for himself. I shall outwit that filter-tipped nitwit, Tareyton."

The trumpets sounded and the time for battle was at hand. At one end of the field Commander Whitehead mounted his gallant steed, Schweppervescence, who awaited the command of his master's voice. At the other end Lord Tareyton sat upon his white horse, Scotch, of the Marlboro breed, a type so common in that land that it was said of them, "Where there's a man, there's a Marlboro."

Again the trumpets sounded and the charge began. The two knights raced toward each other at breakneck speed, their lances, newly polished with Brillo, gleaming in the sunlight. The pages were scurrying off the field as fast as they could go. "Look at the yellow pages," said Whitehead to Tareyton as they missed each other and sped on to opposite ends of the lists.

Several hours passed and it looked as though the tournament would end in a draw when Commander Whitehead decided that now was the time to use the fearful new secret weapon. He whipped it out, aimed it at Tareyton, and placed his forefinger on the push-button. One look at this dreadful weapon brought Tareyton to an abrupt halt. "RAID!!!" he screamed as he turned and shot out of the lists and out of the country like a dart and was never seen again.

"Sir Whitehead is the RCA Victor\*!" exclaimed one and all.

---

\* Raid controlled attack.

Lady Clairol ran to his side. "Oh, Sir Whitehead," she exclaimed breathlessly, "don't just stand there in your athlete's foot! Be sociable! Kiss me! Darling, at last I'm going to swing to the real thing!"

KAREN SELLHORN, twelfth, Glenbrook H. S., Northbrook  
Edna Des Voignes, teacher

**A PROBLEM FACING MODERN SOCIETY**  
**or**  
**DISCOURSE ON THE PREPONDERANCE OF**  
**MODERN MECHANISMS**

Not so many years ago, when all good children squirmed restlessly on their hand-hewn benches under the penetrating eye of the pedagogue and when men were prone to the drudgery of actually thinking for themselves, one could be quite certain of receiving, upon inquiry, a logical answer to any logical question. Nowadays, with the invention of television and the ever increasing scope of commercial advertising, when the future generation sits placidly throwing spitballs into the corner and mom and dad frantically page through a book to see what Dr. Spock says about what-ever-it-is now-it-is, Junior, far better informed and much wittier than his predecessors were and upon whom nothing has been forced for fear of giving him a complex of some kind or a feeling of insecurity, is likely to come up with anything for an answer.

Oh, the vantages of living in a modern era! Perhaps the greatest impact of all these modern conveniences has been upon the education of the younger generation. The evidence is quite obvious. No more need we tolerate the little brown schoolhouse with its cracked bell and potbellied stove. Speak to me no more of spelling by rote or science through microscopes. We are reaching an acme in the evolution of modern education. A child today can receive all of the advantages, with little of the drudgery, of education without ever attending a class if he will only be alert to the forces surrounding him. The classroom is found anywhere, so long as there is a television, billboard, or some other type of enlightening facility within reach. In any given course, he is able to gain a working knowledge that will sufficiently flunk him with flying colors.

Let us take history, for example. There's not a child alive today who doesn't know that DeSoto was the founder of a great automobile industry; that Ben Franklin was a nobody until someone, in a fit of anger, told him to go fly a kite; or that at the age

of three, Davy Crockett became the youngest big-game hunter of his time. And the child's immediate knowledge of the history of his own country is even more astounding. Any tot can tell us that the early American Indians didn't really spend their time living in those preposterous looking tepees making pemmican, but rather led a glamorous life establishing law and order and answering "kimosabe" to their idolized companion on his dashing white steed.

If this does not convince us of the puissance of the faculties in question, let us take, for another example, English. This, of course, includes many phases in itself. After watching only a few minutes of television, not only is Junior able to spell words with amazing ease, such as "does," d-u-z; but he is able to spell them backwards. For instance, "If you have trouble sleeping at night, buy Peels, that's P-e-e-l-s. Remember, Peels is sleep spelled backwards." Someday, I think that I shall write an ode to Ssengnihton. That's nothingness spelled backwards. But, for the present, we must be content to return to the discussion of the matter at hand. Even vocabulary building has been greatly augmented. Whereas "stag" once meant a four-legged mammal mainly inhabiting largely foliated areas, it has now become synonymous with a popular beverage and a strange little man who goes by the nomenclature of Magoo and who is extremely nearsighted.

One might further pursue this discourse through any one particular topic, but I think that the aforementioned topics illustrate the object in view. Slight mention might be made, however, of the natural sciences, such as anatomy. It has become pure delight to study the anatomical structure of man by means of seeing which aspirin disintegrates first in the esophagus or how the mucous membranes shrink upon application of a new wonder drug and man can breathe once again.

Oh, the virtues of modern techniques and mechanisms! Who is there among us who dares to challenge their efficacy or potency! Surely the one who heeds every word of this most freely given advice is the one most content and best prepared for any future emergencies.

We must move up to quality. And so, Junior, for the first time in his life really clean and armed by a protective shield, with his certificate approved by nine out of ten doctors, stands blinking on the threshold of the big, bright world. Let us wish him luck upon his venture—he'll need it!!

JANET SCHROEDER, twelfth, Jacksonville H. S.  
Emma Mae Leonhard, teacher

## THE APOSTLES OF SOL

The day hung, hot and humid, over the boat. Pouring from the smokestack, a thick, noxious smudge lent unwanted shade to the sun-worshippers, who lay panting on the deck. They crowded together, a carpet of fair skins and leathern. Long limbs, glistening with oil, brushed chunky legs; a dark head bumped a sun-bleached one, while hundreds of pairs of jeweled plastic sunglasses stared vacantly upward. A coke bottle clanked to its side and circumscribed a rumbling path around a detective magazine. Here an impatient sun-bather stood up, leaving behind his damp imprint. Laughter tinkled. A radio blared.

Suddenly the crowd tensed, sensing a change. Now clouds obscured the sun while a chill wind whistled. Hands grabbed sweaters, pulled up straps, tugged down shorts. The mottled carpet disintegrated into persons scurrying for shelter. Soon only the thick, noxious smudge poured forth into the swirling mists of approaching storm.

JEANNE HARRIS, twelfth, Peoria H. S.  
Emily E. Rice, teacher

## SOUNDS

Time after time, twenty-four hours a day, the same sounds are heard by the same people, but at night the meanings that are brought to mind are much more poignant than those of the daytime.

A train whistle during the day is accepted as something which only adds to the ordinary din and confusion; however, at night its mournful wail, ever increasing from the distance to its crescendo and finally fading away, reminds us of past journeys, pleasant and sad, and of tearful farewells and joyous homecomings.

The daytime wind blows hats and smoke, pushes and tugs at high-flying kites, and is accepted, rejected, or disregarded by those exposed to its whims; at night, it howls down the chimneys and shrieks around house corners with the fury of a demented banshee, while the trees rustle and creak their protests at being disturbed.

The ring of a telephone is considered a necessary nuisance between dawn and dusk. It means only routine business calls or chats with friends or relatives. But—at night—there is an urgent, insistent, even demanding note in its sudden shrill ring; and we become instantly awake with horrifying thoughts of an accident, illness, or death of a loved one.

CONNIE MILLER, eleventh, Bloomington H. S.  
Grace Schedel, teacher

## DARKNESS

The room is nearly dark. From one corner a golden light flickers. A slender white candle stands erect on a bare table. Its bright yellow flame dances and plays with the shadows. White wax flows down the graceful body, moving quickly, then slowly. Small wisps of gray smoke curl gracefully around the flickering flame, only to melt out into a black eternity. Slowly the charred wick burns down. The silent shadows fall lower; the golden light is soft. The wick burns out. A white, soft, misshapen lump remains. The room is dark.

MARTHA WOLFE, eleventh, Jacksonville H. S.  
Maurine Self, teacher

## MANUEL

Manuel was trotting next to the courtyard wall, running a stick along the crumbling plaster, hoping that some day he might knock out a brick. The pale yellow walls, rough and dusty, surmounted by orange tiling faded from long exposure, were transversed with cracks and crevices in abstract, wriggling designs. No moss or vines clung to these walls, making their green, leafy patterns; for Manuel was in the roadway, outside the courtyard, where the world was hot and dry, and the clay was exposed to a blistering sun and the grinding of many feet. At noonday, the heat was a stifling cloud settled on the whole countryside; it mixed with a fog of dust and clung to the nose and mouth and lungs.

Manuel was running to set the air in a cooling motion, but it was foolish effort; for the instant he stopped, the heat pressed around and through him with more resolute obstinacy. At times like these, he thought of the evenings. When sunset came, and the welcome, easy breeze arose, the dust was only rippled in its tracks; but when the thin, lonely wind of evening keened through the mesquite as it hurried down the roadway, the dust was lifted in swirls and gusts, while broken pieces of cholla and prickly pear rolled along the ground like smooth stones in a rushing stream. The desert was not neighbor to the Cantrel hacienda—it was host; and the servants' little child had grown with the desert as his teacher and playmate. Manuel knew its merciless days, its bitter nights, and its gentle purple and orange-hued evenings—and he loved them all.

But at the present moment he was going to play with the Lady Mariá Elena in the courtyard. The gardener's entrance was an unobtrusive, almost camouflaged crack in the wall, but Manuel

knew where to find it, and he approached and knocked boldly. The taciturn, leathern governess opened the door, her black drapings swinging back and forth with calm that mourning vestments seem to possess inherently. She wished to impress the full dignity of her situation upon the young one's mind, but he hardly noticed. She had intimidated Manuel at ages four and five, even at age six; but at age seven, she had become a sight much too familiar to be forbidding.

Manuel always felt excitement when he stepped into this world of cool greenness and tinted tiles. Mariá Elena was a little figure in short, white skirts and long stockings, standing next to the tree bench which was possessed by the governess's formidable needlework case. Her proper position was only for appearance—these two had much better trees, especially the ancient oak, hollow almost enough for a child to climb in it. It was no longer necessary to carry water for this tree—the roots reached to the damp soil deep under the surface. It had no need for human care.

Mariá Elena stood quietly as her governess had admonished—but for no more than five seconds. With a toss of a head already arrogant at nine years, she set off running to meet him, long, dark curls bouncing down her back, and an arm outheld to display a new bracelet. The silver, set with rounded turquoise stones, was so highly polished that it glinted in the infrequent fragments of sunlight allowed to pass through the leafy filters of the tall oaks: a thin band on the delicate wrist of a nobleman's child. The silent sentinel was watching them, not concealing her disapproval in the slightest, so Manuel bowed politely; but his eyes were twinkling with suppressed laughter and the corners of his mouth made little quirking motions. Mariá Elena replied with a mock curtsy and laughed outright. The governess gave her a most penetrating disciplinary glance but Mariá pretended not to notice, and, once more extending her wrist, demanded of Manuel, "Do you like it?"

He looked at it with respectful admiration. "It is very beautiful."

"Gracias," she said with a pleased smile. "Vamonos," as she grabbed his hand and ran off toward the big oak at the far corner of the courtyard. The governess stood a moment watching them and then repaired to her needlework with a contented sigh.

\* \* \*

Just about a year later, the fragments of sunlight were again dancing on the shaded, cool lawn and the governess was sitting

on her tree bench, dozing fitfully with her needle work in her lap. Manuel and Mariá Elena were sitting by the large oak tree; she was making mats from the longer grass around the tree's base and he was making a table out of sticks and a piece of twine he had found in the farmyard.

From out the house her mother and father came across the mosaic patio, followed by Elena's portentous maid. Down the steps and into the garden they came, with reserve most unusual for the time and place.

Her mother's quiet voice sounded, "Mariá Elena, hija miá, where are you? Your papá has returned."

Mariá started up with glowing eyes and bounded to her papá, who swung her up from force of habit and for self-preservation, but soon placed her down at a glance from his wife. Manuel had scrambled to his feet the minute he heard voices and was now standing uneasily next to the tree, more behind and in it than beside it. Mariá's papá put his hands on her shoulders and looked at her eyes with a touch of resigned sadness.

He smiled, "I have something for you, hija miá." Her whole form became animated as she clapped her hands and bounced.

"Come with me and I will show you," her father said, taking the anticipating hand and leading her toward the house. The mother and the maid followed. Manuel relaxed a little, most thankful that he hadn't been noticed. He sat down in hopes of finishing the table before she returned.

Mariá Elena was gazing at a long-skirted, white gown with a red sash, fine, stiff taffeta covered with creamy lace that fell in slender folds to the floor. "And here are the others, for you to wear every day," her mother continued, lifting some long dresses of cotton stuffs in subdued yellows, browns, blues and greens. But Mariá was enthralled with the white lace and the red sash.

"Oh, mayn't I put it on?" she pleaded.

"Of course, querida," her father replied.

Mariá gathered up the dress and scampered into her dressing room, her maid grumbling behind. In a few moments, a long-skirted, white vision appeared, glistening eyes and radiant face framed by a mist of disordered dark hair. "Oh, isn't it beautiful?" she exulted, turning to show her parents. She paused, and sudden thought seizing, "May I go show Manuel?"

Her mother looked at the father with solemn determination. Her father spoke. "I am afraid that you won't be able to see Manuel any more."

Mariá Elena frowned, bewildered.

Her mother added, "You are a lady, querida, and you must learn to behave like a lady. We have let you be with Manuel because God has given us no other children to be your brothers and sisters. Perhaps it was unwise, but we did not want you to grow up alone. But now you must learn to behave like a fine lady and you cannot play with the servants' children."

Mariá's bewildered frown became an unhappy pout. "But I want to show Manuel," she whimpered.

"No, hija miá, you cannot see him," her father answered with finality as he took his wife's hand and left the child to her maid.

Mariá Elena shouted, "But I want to show Manuel!" and she ran to her bedchamber, sobbing.

Manuel had long since finished his table and was sitting against the big tree, twirling a wilting grass in his fingers. The governess arose and squinted at the declining sun. Seeing Manuel alone, she presumed Mariá had left, but brusquely concealed her own negligence by telling Manuel that he had best leave.

"I am waiting for the Lady Mariá Elena to come out," he said, having risen respectfully.

"I think you had best be gone by the time I return," she repeated, bearing her needlework case toward the house with great ceremony. Manuel kicked a few pieces of stray grass gently with his toe and began to walk to the door in the wall. He stopped and turned around, peering at the house, and then rushed back to the big oak and squeezed inside. He stayed there for what seemed an interminable time, but it wouldn't have made any difference, for the governess did not return.

When he ventured out, the courtyard was dusky, the sun having passed below the wall and the trees affording an effective block for only the sky's reflected light. He sat down against the tree again, peering around at the house every once in a while until the courtyard was almost totally dark. A servant appeared on the patio bearing several lanterns which he placed in waiting hands. A tall, graying gentleman with a thin mustache was ushered onto the patio, followed by Elena's parents. Before they were settled, Elena appeared in the doorway and ran to her uncle, the long white skirts held out proudly. Mariá performed a coquettish curtsy and sat down primly, laughing.

Manuel arose and stumbled his way to the gate and out into the roadway. The sunset's colors were beginning to fade and a gentle breeze was blowing. He picked up a stick and walked slowly along, breaking off little bits and dropping them in the dust.

SUSAN LEICH, twelfth, Glenbrook H. S., Northbrook  
John Murphy, teacher

## WHAT HAPPENED TO AFTER

What I want to know is whatever happened to those action-packed summer hours that followed dinner, the time of day called After. "I'll see you after, Bill!" you yelled as querulous mothers broke up the ball game.

After was when you played red light, red rover, and hide. It was when you caught lightning bugs. After was the time for roller skating. After was a time for wrestling in cool grass, a time for playing knife, the game called mumblety-peg. You always had a game of kick-the-can, always.

After was when you played ball until the night swallowed the shape of the ball. If there was a house going up in the neighborhood, you and the gang played tag at the house and ran over the scaffolding for hide-and-seek.

After was enough to give any parent the jitters, but no parent was ever around during after.

Now after is gone. Now it seems that there's only time for a short yawn after dinner. In those golden days time stretched forever. You did more living in after than you do now in a week.

Could it be that after, like so many favored lands, is a special province never more to be visited once you've gone over the hump of twelve years old?

BRIAN PAIGE, twelfth, St. Procopius Academy, Lisle  
Stanford Busby, teacher

## THE RAINBOW

The hot afternoon sun drove down the walk into his eyes, but he did not turn his head to avoid the rays; rather he half-closed his eyes and continued walking without moving his head. He walked straight ahead, counting one, two, three, four; one, two, three, four; left, right; left, right. Toward the side he saw a group of children talking in excited whispers and nodding toward him. He walked past them with an ease that he had learned to pretend, and then something within him made his muscles tighten and his face set. A rock hit his scalp, and he knew later, when he stopped to touch it, that it would be raw and probably there would be some blood in his hair, only just a little bit. He did not cry nor run when he felt the rock. He thought, it was only a rock, or a pebble, only one. Farther down the block he saw a group of children spread along the walk, in his path.

"Ah! Here comes the nigger kid."

"He's a nigger? Ah didn't all know that, did you all?"

"Why, he ain't a nigger. His ma's white."

"He's black enuf though. He must be a nigger."

"He sure acts like a white. Why, ah don't think he's goin' to move!"

"Ya think he'll walk right through our game?"

"No nigger's goin' ta live to do that!"

They stood up and faced him. He paused, then turned from the sun's gleaming light, to walk around them.

"I quess he's a nigger, all right. He's yellow after all."

"Let's follow him, huh?"

They picked up their marbles from the ground and walked with him.

"My pa says that his mother must be one of those white women from the North. Just Northern white trash."

He stopped, to turn to them. He thought they were going to leave, but they didn't, and then he felt his eyes. He blinked, but it was too late. A tear dribbled down his cheeks. He said to himself it was the sun that made him do it. He wasn't a cry-baby. It was the sun.

"What's wrong? Want ya mama?"

"Go ahead, play with ya nigger friends."

"He can't, because he ain't a nigger. Even niggers don't bawl like that."

It was the sun, he thought. It was only the sun. He was too old to let kids bother him.

"Leave me alone!" he cried. "Leave me alone!" He turned and ran down the street. Panting, he stopped and realized that he had done it all wrong again. He should have fought them like a white man or endured them like a nigger; but he had done neither, and both, because he was neither and both.

There was a Negro woman on the porch of the house next to his house. Every day he came home from school she was on the porch sewing, but she had never looked up at him. There were some Negroes playing baseball, but when he came near them, they stopped without a word and picked up the ball and the old piece of wood they used for a bat and walked up on one of the porches and sat there. They never looked at him; they only sensed he was there. There was a little girl that a man with his t-shirt on, home from the factory, was bouncing on his knees. She was laughing, and she saw him walking and raised her hand, pointing at him.

"Looke, lookee. Who he, Daddy?"

She was the only one that had seen him. Her father silenced

her, and he heard her father whisper, "Sh! He go to a white school. Hush!"

The father picked her up and took her into the house and closed the door, though it was the hottest May any one had ever felt. Moments later the boy could feel the noses pressed to the window, though if he looked, he wouldn't be able to find them.

There was an old ragman going up the street, screaming and wondering why no one appeared from the doors. He saw the boy and waved, and the boy, in wonder, waved back. The ragman drove his old horse down the street, but the boy continued waving at him as the ragman went down the long road. He waved and waved until the ragman was small; and then after the ragman turned the corner, the boy stopped waving and turned again and began to run. He ran down the block; and as he ran, he thought of the man who had waved to him. He felt all the strange choked feeling leaving him. He felt that there was nothing so beautiful as his own legs pumping the ground and the hot air that he gulped.

He leaped up the steps of his house and stopped on the porch. He sat in one of the chairs there and waited, feeling the pain pounding him in his chest. He tried to eat this air as he did food, and then when the pain stopped he lay in the chair, feeling peace and bliss. He just watched the tops of the houses across the street against the sky, and then he watched the sky, and then the clouds, and then back to the sky again. He looked at the sky hard and tried to see through the blue to the other colors he was sure it held. Sometimes after a rain it would show some of its colors, but usually it hid them with this blue. He thought that if all his life he looked through the blue and tried to see through it, one day he would see those colors.

The window next to him was open, and the torn shade blew against him, rubbing his face. Each time the wind blew, the shade tore a little bit more. Inside he heard his mother talking to that man. That man always had the same suit on.

"I tell you, Brother Morgan, I don't know what to do."

"But you know it is the right way. Man must not be bound by prejudice."

"Yes, I know that, and you know that. That's why I married Chuck, because I believed it, and so did he and. . . ."

"Are you sorry? Do you think that man's values can be measured. . . ."

"No! no. It isn't that. It isn't that at all. It's just during the war, when Chuck was in the army, it was all right. And then after

he died even, when I kept on working, it was all right. But now since I've moved here. . . ."

She threw her arms hopelessly around.

"You have shown that you believe in the brotherhood of man. The only way to show it is to follow your convictions, which you have done. Now you must show other people. This is where you can best serve. . . ."

"Yes, yes, I know that. But it's so hard. . . ."

"On you? yes, but. . . ."

"No, it's all right. People don't mind me talking about brotherhood. I think that's what's different. When I talk with different people it's all right, but when they see George. Oh! It just gets impossible."

"Don't worry about George. He's too young to realize what it's all about. Besides you're the one that's fighting. He probably doesn't even see that anything's wrong."

"No, I suppose not."

"Of course, he doesn't. You certainly never showed prejudice in the family."

That man had reached the screen door, and with his back turned to the street and his side to George, he stood facing his mother. His mother looked past that man over to George.

"Why, George, I didn't know you were here!"

"I jus got here," he said, lying easily. He tried to slip between the two, as they stood in the doorway.

"Say 'hello!' to Reverend Morgan, George."

"Hello," the boy said and turned to leave again.

"Hello, and how are you my boy," said the Reverend, running his hot sweaty hand through the boy's curly locks.

"O. K." the boy answered, shaking his head loose. "Ma, kin I go in now?"

"Why no. Don't leave without talking to Reverend Morgan. You two should be great friends. Why, Reverend Morgan was the minister at your father's and my wedding. Come here, George."

"My father?"

"Yes, George, your father was a fine man," said the Reverend hurriedly. That man paused, and then with a forced grin, his gold tooth twinkling said, "Where are all your white . . . ah . . . friends?"

"I don't know," the boy said sullenly.

"How was school?"

"O. K."

"Your mother and I had a great deal of trouble getting you

in *that* school. You know that, don't you? I hope you're working hard."

"Yes, suh."

A Southern Negro's reply, the minister thought hurriedly. "Making a lot of friends at school, I hope. But probably you prefer to play with the Negroes, I mean colored, around here. Stay with your own kind. Yes, well, that's all right, but really you should get out. Look at your mother and your father. Now she . . ."

"Brother Morgan, I think we shouldn't keep you any longer," his mother suggested hurriedly.

"What? Oh, yes, Martha. Well, good-day. Good-day Martha. Good-day George. Good-day all."

The screen door banged shut, and then as it bounced, the broad hand inserted itself again.

"Oops! forgot my hat. Thanks, Mrs. Besen," he laughed, as if there were some joke. "Well, Good-day again."

"Where are you going, George?"

"To my. . . ."

"The supper's on the table. Don't you want it?"

"I'm not hungry."

"I think maybe you better eat. I have it all ready."

They walked to the wooden table in the kitchen with a plastic cloth over it.

"Here you are. We haven't had stew in a long time, have we?" she said, carefully dishing it out.

"No."

"Where were you all this time?"

"Walking."

"Walking? All that time after school. How do you like school? Oh, well, if you don't want to say anything. . . . If you want to bring your friends here to the house. I'll be happy. . . ."

"Why do we always have to talk about friends! I don't have any. None!"

"Why George, don't say that. Eat your stew."

"I don't want it. I just want to go to my. . . ."

"George! Really you're behaving so funny lately. Like just now with Reverend Morgan. I wish you'd remember that he was the minister at our wedding."

"Wedding?"

"Yes, your father's and mine."

"Was my father a nigger?"

She looked up quickly at him. Her fork fell to the stew, and some gravy splashed on the table.

"Your father was a Negro, yes. You knew that before though. Why do you bring that up?"

"I don't know. I just wanted to make sure."

She looked at him for a moment, nervously. "Looks like it's going to rain."

She rose and shut the kitchen window, and then went into the other room to close two more.

He thought of two sentences which when he put them together made a sort of poem. "My father was a nigger. My mother is a white." But it lacked an ending. He tried to think of the ending.

"Reverend Morgan was sorry you didn't come home earlier. He wanted to talk to you."

"No, he didn't. He just wanted to talk to you, ma."

She winced noticeably. He thought, I'm hurting her. Why don't I shut up.

"No, George. . . ."

"He wanted to talk with you about more speeches about . . . about. . . . What are they about?"

"Brotherhood," she said.

"Yea, brotherhood."

"It looks like that was just a shower. It's about stopped," she said.

He didn't reply. He thought about the poem. "My father was a nigger. My mother is a white."

"Ma," he asked, "if pa was a nigger, and you is a white, what does that make me?"

"A human being like everyone else." She laid down her fork.

"Yes, but would I be a nigger or. . . ."

"George, I wish you wouldn't say nigger. It's Negro."

"Everyone at school says nigger. Every one at school says, 'Nigger, nigger, nigger. Look at the nigger! Look at the nigger!'"

"Eat your stew, George."

"Ya know who they're calling that? Huh? Not me. I ain't nigger, am I, if I got a white ma. But my pa was a nigger. What does that make me? Huh? Ma, listen! My father was a nigger. My mother is a white. So I am a . . . What am I? How do ya end it? Huh?"

"George, George, George. . . ." she repeated listlessly.

"Hey, ma, answer me!" He reached to her arm and pulled at it hard.

"I'm not a nigger, 'cause I think I'm white, and I'm not white, 'cause I'm colored, a nigger. So I'm nothing. What am I? Huh? I dare ya! Answer me. Oh, please. Oh, please, please, answer me!"

"George, I . . . I . . . I . . . and your father, we, that is, yes we believed that a man was a man regardless. That's what we and Reverend Morgan thought, and that's that. We believe in brotherhood. We're fighting for . . ."

"Yea, yea, yea. You're fighting. Everyone's fighting for something. But who's fightin' for me? Huh? Who?"

"George, please don't. You'll understand all this some day."

"But I want to know now, ma. Now! Who am I?"

"Why did you have to find out? Why did you? How? How? I never did this. I don't see how all of a sudden you could think such things. How?"

"Ever find out! Ever find out?" He pushed aside the stew and laid his head on the table.

He thought he was crying, but he knew that he was really laughing. He raised his head from the table. His mother was shaking with fear and looked at him, stricken.

"I'll tell ya how! I came home today, after walking blocks and blocks. I walked and walked, as far as I could, and ya know what, ma? Ya know what? The only person I could find who didn't know about me was a ragman. Some dirty Polish or Lithuanian ragman who drove his horse from over five blocks away. You know what? That isn't all. Tomorrow it'll reach him, and he'll know too. And then ya know what? The whole world'll know. The whole world! There won't be any one who can stand me, nigger, white, Chinese, Polacks, all of them won't stand me, because I'm nothing. Nothing! Reverend Morgan can't stand me now, and you won't be able to tomorrow. The only person who can stand me will be me! Isn't that funny? Me! And then you know what'll happen? Someday I'll say, 'Who am I?' for the millionth time, and suddenly I won't be able to stand me either."

He paused, exhausted. Outside he heard the rain dripping from the roof to the walk below. The drops on the windows dribbled down the glass. He had never felt such silence. He had never felt such solitude.

She hasn't heard me, he thought. She hasn't even heard. Why look, she's going right on eating. It had been nothing. It had been a brief wind, parting the clouds, and now they're floating together again. If he stopped now and went to bed, all would be forgotten.

"Ya know the funny part about it?" the boy spoke to an empty auditorium. "No one will be able to stand me, and yet you and Reverend Morgan and all the rest will go right on preachin'. You'll go right on. . . . And when I'm dead, ya kin say, 'My husband was a nigger. I am a white. Here's my son. We sho don't know what he was. But he kin be Example 33 that we shore practiced brotherhood.'"

He ended with a hoarse, low voice. The poem was ended.

He left the table and the room and his mother eating the stew. She finished and turned the water on for the dishes. She raised the kitchen window. She wiped each dish and set it on the porcelain counter. Outside, through the window, there was a screech of brakes heard. She picked up a dish and continued wiping it. Someone ran to the porch and knocked loudly. She untied her apron and walked slowly to the door.

Out in the street a clump of people stood surrounding the object in the road. A police car sped down the street toward the scene. The truck driver talked with the man next to him, who said, "Don't matter much. Probably better off."

Far above the housetops a rainbow cut through the endless blue sky, as the only eulogy to the boy who was called George.

Joy HALFTER, eleventh, York Comm. H. S., Elmhurst  
R. Warner Brown, teacher

### THE DIGGER

The sun was hot overhead, but between the trees below there was a little shade. The man in the faded blue work clothes felt the heat and knew of the cool shade nearby, but kept on methodically at his work, pausing only now and then to wipe the sweat off his face and neck. His face wore little expression, and so engrossed was he in his work that he did not notice the small boy who walked up and stood looking at the man and his work.

"Whatcha doing?" he asked.

"I'm digging."

"Digging a ditch?"

"In a way, I guess."

"Where's it going?"

"What?"

"The ditch."

"It's not going any place. It's not big enough."

The child walked around to where he could look down into the man's face. For a long time there was no sound but the

methodical working of the man. His hard, calloused, brown hands gripped the shovel firmly, and the muscles of his arms worked in perfect rhythm in the push and pull of his task. Many hours he had been at the work, but the rhythm of his movements never faltered or changed.

"Does water go in there?" asked the boy.

"No."

"What does, then?"

"A lot of trouble, pain, and heartache. Love, too, I guess."

"Where's it go?"

"Who knows? Once it's in there nobody can tell; some don't care."

Again there was silence but for the steady toiling of the worker. The boy watched the man as if fascinated, his eyes rising and falling with the shovel.

"Do you like digging?" he finally asked.

"No more than anybody, a little less than most, I guess."

The man said no more but kept at his work. The boy became very nervous, put his hands behind him and backed off a step.

"I don't like you," he said.

The man stopped his work for the first time then. He leaned on his shovel and looked up at the boy's face.

"Why?"

"I don't know. I just don't. I better go now."

With the last remark still sounding in the warm air, the child turned and dashed away; the man resumed his work.

A screech of tires, a hoarse shout of warning, but all in vain, for the car had stopped too late, the boy had jumped too slowly—and all was still. The man straightened his stiff back and, with his hand shading his eyes, saw the elderly gentleman shake his head, saw the excited crowd disperse. Giving a long sigh, he heaved the shovel to his shoulder and climbed up. He walked through the patches of shade, down the lane to a new spot.

"I hate this job," he said, as he began working again.

NANCY GAINES, twelfth, East Richland H. S., Olney  
Margaret Griffin, teacher

### AUTUMN INTERLUDE

The woods was dim even though it was mid afternoon. Here and there, lacy shafts of autumn sun dappled the mossy ground, producing an eerie half-light that gave a silvery tone to the foliage. The broad rough tree trunks rose from the ground with

quiet dignity, holding aloft their golden offerings of crisp leaves in their sturdy branches. The bustle of the slowly falling leaves, chatter of the birds, and the scrabbling sounds of the small animals seemed muffled in the majesty of the forest. Even the stream seemed to trickle more slowly, spreading its cold liquid silver over the solemn gray stones and jostling the laughing pebbles in its way. The entire forest seemed to be waiting serenely for something lovely that was about to happen.

Sitting hidden in the cove of bushes beside the stream, the boy could feel the anticipation of the forest. He wriggled in quiet excitement, drawing his knees up to his chest. His eyes sparkled like polished amber as he peered through the leaves of his hiding place. A spider trickled down its web and onto his hand. It tickled, and he hid his tousled brown head between his knees to keep from laughing and revealing himself. He seemed to be a part of the forest, sitting there. He was perhaps six or seven, small for his age. His eyes were large in a soft freckled face and they darted about with intelligent interest. The grayed tee shirt he wore bore the faded name of a famous cowboy pictured astride a rearing palomino. The shirt had obviously seen better days. It showed plainly the remains of a long-ago jelly sandwich and Popsicles. His jeans were rolled up to reveal scraped, round knees. The jeans were patched and faded, secured at the waist by a brown leather belt that was much too large. A new hole had been punched far from the end, and the extra hunk of leather was tooth-marked where the boy had chewed it. It was a useful thing, that hunk of leather. Now he used it to brush away the spider from his hand and to tease the creature gently. So absorbed was he in this game that he almost didn't hear the forest hold its breath for the thing it had been waiting for. He could feel every mood of the forest, this boy. He spent most of his time there, for it was there that he found the peace and joy and beauty of his young life. He watched things live and grow, and he often seemed to become part of them while he was there. The forest and its animals were his friends, his playhouse, his toys, his pets, and all the other things a little boy must have. Because of this, his mood corresponded to the mood of the forest, just as it would to a close friend. His body tensed as the suspense of the forest shot into his veins. He held his breath to wait for the climax.

Slowly, very slowly, the sleek doe stepped from the under-brush across the stream and stood poised like a figurine on the edge of the water. One delicate hoof rested daintily on a rock. Her big brown eyes moved slowly about and her nose twitched

prettily. A shaft of sunlight flowed over her like a spotlight on a *prima donna*. Her fragile ears were pricked gently, giving her an air of quiet caution. In his hideaway the boy shivered with excitement. His eyes never left the lovely form and a quiet smile lighted his face. He sat with motionless patience. Slowly, the doe lowered her head to drink. As if this were a signal, a young fawn popped out of the bushes. For the next few minutes the only sound was the lapping of the delicate pink tongues in the silver stream. The fawn hovered close to his mother, confident of her protection. He was scrawny and ungainly on his long legs, and his eyes gazed slowly around him even as he drank.

The boy sat in silent, joyful satisfaction. He had witnessed many lovely things in the forest, but never had he seen anything as beautiful as the doe and her clumsy young fawn. He was so entranced that he practically didn't hear the shot. He didn't even jump. But he saw the blood pour crimson from the doe's side as she fell. Her eyes were open in gentle surprise as she crumpled gracefully. The cool stream water flowed over her head and was tinged pink by the blood that ran from her mouth. The fawn didn't even pause. The instinct of fear was too great. As suddenly as he had appeared, he was gone.

The forest was still; it was a stillness of horror and fear and sorrow. There was no breeze. The deathly quiet was only broken by the anguished sobs of a small boy who had just learned about Life.

BECKY BOURLAND, eleventh, Peoria H. S.  
Muriel Peterson, teacher

### FIVE MINUTES UNTIL MAY

I went out on this beautiful evening to welcome May, which was just over the hill to the east. The Dipper hung so high that I had to tilt my head to see it, and Cassiopeia was down on the horizon half-hidden by the snow-capped mountains. Pegasus was out of sight, and Aquila had not yet risen. The evening was young.

Across the river the hylas were shrilling with the bass counter-point of song-fested frogs in irregular syncopation. A wise old owl hooted from the fragrant pines which blanketed the hillside. A breeze carrying a slight chill whispered among the apple trees.

My eyes became accustomed to the darkness, and I walked out into the middle pasture. I could see the stark whiteness of the big clumps of paper birches at the far corner of the pasture. Then I came to the place where bird's-foot violets purpled the sloping bank of the rippling brook by daylight, and their fragrance momentarily filled the air.

Down in the valley came the thin voice of a pup proclaiming his right to challenge the mysteries of the night. I turned back toward the house and saw the white cloud of apple blossoms in the trees in back of the woodshed. When I glanced at the sky again, the clock of the stars pointed to five minutes until May.

BETSY GIBBS, eleventh, East H. S., Rockford  
Jeanne Claeys, teacher

### MY GRANDMOTHER

Everyone in this world has a grandmother, whether she is here or Somewhere Else. And this I know for certain: everyone has a grandmother in his heart.

I love my grandmother because she bakes homemade bread. First, she ties up her hair in a big blue handkerchief and mixes the dough and lets it rise, and kneads the dough and lets it rise, and finally she bakes it. The smell of baking bread is, to me, the best smell I know.

I love my grandmother because she writes songs and poems. She writes silly, little poems about each member of the family; and at four-year intervals, since she was of voting age, she has written a poem about her favorite Presidential candidate.

I love my grandmother because she plays the piano. And no matter how many times I hear her, I wonder at how her aging fingers can move so nimbly over the keys. I am sure that if she lost her eyesight tomorrow, she could still play "Twilight-Time" without a discord.

I love my grandmother because she watches soap operas. She would never miss what she calls her "stories." With each visit, we are informed on the plight of every character, and she speaks of them as if they were intimate friends.

I love my grandmother because she rubs my back when I am sick. Sometimes she writes names of people we both know on my back, and I try to guess them. If I can't, she erases and starts again. We both laugh then, and I feel better.

I love my grandmother because she reads her prayer book every day. The book has a prayer for each day of the year; she has read them for so many years that she should hardly need to open the cover. The book is torn and the pages are loose and each day is marked by a narrow, blue, velvet ribbon.

Last of all, I love my grandmother because she loves me.

MARY JACOBSON, eleventh, Elgin H. S.  
Enid M. Burns, teacher

## CONFESIONS OF A BUTTER ADDICT

"Unbelievable" does not describe my situation. "Incredible" comes closer, but "fantastic" fits perfectly. Soon I shall describe the precise moment I became involved in this nightmare. I have never exposed it to anyone—human or otherwise—before, because each time I contemplate the revelation of my revolting habit, either fear of my friends' reactions or my own cowardice forces me to abandon this thought. It would be unfair to burden them with my problems, although several people have commented on my unusually irrational behavior whenever anything the color of YELLOW happens to come into a conversation. Well, enough procrastination. Let's get to the point with no more delay. My problem can be summed up in a few simple words: I AM A BUTTER ADDICT!

I am a butter addict. The doctors here at B.A.L. (Butter Addiction Institute) assure me that the realization of my problem constitutes the most vital step in the rehabilitation process.

In the beginning I had not a single trace of abnormality. Then, WHAMMO! it happened. The bell rang for class dismissal; I proceeded to the cafeteria with the rest of my classmates. Without noticing, I took a piece of bread and coated it with that yellow substance I had heard so much about. I walked calmly to a table, not knowing what agony awaited me. I took a bite; my tongue and the roof of my mouth were instantly coated with delicious fire; there was a strange, itchy feeling beneath my tongue. I became a trifle nauseated. I swallowed, and a burning sensation accompanied the substance down my throat. As the butter began to find its way into my system, I got a little light-headed. I HAD TO HAVE MORE! I was hooked.

That first night I slept as well as a baby and had beautiful yellow dreams. The following day my classes seemed to drag on endlessly; noon would *never* come. I became extremely nervous and quite upset. When I knew no one was watching me, I took a bag of butter and crackers from my notebook, went into the lounge, and had a "fix." I knew this was to become one of the biggest joys of my life; I plotted further "butter breaks." I then went into the rest room so I could procure safe hiding places for my valuables. I ingeniously hid the butter in the top of the towel case, the crackers in the piping under the sink. Oh, the craftiness of my criminal mind!

For some time it went on in this way. Only after a while did I discover I had to visit the rest room in the afternoon, as well as slyly slip in a glass of buttermilk on the side.

About the third month after that first "fix," a queasy feeling developed in the left side of my stomach. I also had short periods of depression. I found I could be happy only when I had some butter. I began taking long walks on which I found myself wandering into delicatessens to stare dumbly into the dairy cases. My disposition became irritable; soon the majority of my friends refused to associate with me.

Then the inevitable happened: my parents refused to recognize me as one of the family. They disowned me. I tried desperately, but futilely, to find others, but none would have me. The word had gotten out; I had been put on the "black list" as a butter addict.

I sold all my possessions, including my car (sport-type), but the money disappeared too quickly. I managed to procure a few dollars here and there and dealt with the black market to get my precious butter. I occasionally got employment for a day as a dishwasher, but my rapidly declining strength kept me from doing too much work. The whole situation soon forced me to start "making it" with oleomargarine. Although it had a yellow color and tasted the same as butter, it gave me acute headaches (migraine-type). I would rather die than be deprived of my butter. . . .

I was crushed, despondent, beside myself with grief. I grabbed my last two pounds of oleomargarine and voraciously devoured both pounds. The room swirled and I saw huge yellow Caterpillars. In plain and simple English, I had "flipped."

The following months were a blur of dives (bar-type), flop houses (dorm-type), hobo jungles (fraternity-type), and butter pushers (black market-type). When the authorities finally found me, I had sunk to the *lowest* of the *low* forms of butter—LARD. They moved me to the Butter Addict Institute, where I became an inmate until the doctors felt I could again cope with the normal world, the world in which there were no butter addicts.

I have lived at this Institute for the past five months; my doctors tell me I will be able to enter and live again in the outside world. Up to the present my cure has been quite successful.

I won't go into all the horrifying things I experienced while undergoing the early part of my rehabilitation. I will merely tell you that I had great difficulty in kicking the habit. I do feel that I now have my problem well under control. I can look at canaries, caution lights, lemons, traffic signals, and mustard without getting that old feeling. The urge does occasionally obsess me when I ride in taxi-cabs. Butter, of course, will never again become a part of my life.

My cure was induced by what the doctors call reverse addiction. They gradually cut down my ration of butter and substituted in its place large amounts of catsup. I had a marked dislike for catsup. For close to three months I continued to dislike catsup; I really despised the stuff! But eventually my resistance wore down. Catsup actually began to hold some appeal! Now I have even developed a taste for it!

The future seems promising for me. My residence in the Institute will terminate in two-and-one-half months. A well-known school has written me several letters, promising to arrange for me to teach a course in Butter Addiction when I leave the Institute. I have also been offered the opportunity to write a book for the National Tomato Industries.

I have but one statement to make—I AM A CATSUP ADDICT!

Joy Wallk, twelfth, Peoria H. S.  
Emily E. Rice, teacher

### ILL ALWAYS REMEMBER DONNA

When I approached the museum that first day, I felt suddenly uneasy, as if I had come at the wrong time. There was something about the large brick building, desolate and almost deserted, looming up ahead of me, that made me wish, not for the first time, that I had never taken the job there.

Once inside, the gloominess of the place seemed to surround and depress me. The other guides sat talking and laughing together, but somehow their prattle seemed out of place there, as if it were a church instead of just a small-town museum where I was going to be guide for the summer.

I went upstairs and through the rooms, musty and strange, from another age, another century, and, to me, another world. I had never been interested in history, so what was there to interest me in this place, filled with antiques? I decided I had to stick to this job, dull as it seemed, because I needed the money, but I knew I wouldn't enjoy it.

I went back downstairs and into the parlor. The mood held. In fact, to me, there was something almost grotesque in the way everything—furniture, books, and lamps—was arranged exactly as it had been a hundred years ago. From the other room I heard a shriek of laughter which was in such direct contrast to my depressed state that I could hardly bear it. I stood up. I had to get out of this place.

And then Donna came in. She was one of the older guides, cute and vivacious, and she looked as though she definitely belonged on the dance floor, not in this dungeon. I told her that.

Donna looked surprised, saying she loved it there. "Let me show you around," she said, eagerly.

I'll never forget that tour of the museum, for it marked the beginning of a new way of life for me. I wasn't interested at the time in all the dates and statistics Donna told me; my eyes were on her face, which was suddenly animated. She talked happily, as if she really enjoyed what she was doing, and I began to believe that she had meant it when she said she loved it there. I was filled with surprise and wonder that anyone could feel attached to something so old and remote.

When we were back in the parlor, I tried to express myself in words, but I just couldn't speak. It was all so overwhelming. "This piano," Donna told me, "is a hundred years old, but it works perfectly." To show me, she slid onto the bench and began to play.

Somehow it no longer seemed strange that Donna should be playing songs of the past in a room out of the past, just as naturally as if she had lived a hundred years ago. It was only then that it all became clear to me. I pictured another girl, in a different dress but with the same light in her eyes, the same feelings as Donna was having, playing the same piano a hundred years ago. Time could change styles, I realized, but not people.

From the other room I heard a burst of laughter, and I thought of how other girls had laughed in this house in the same way. Donna smiled at me, and I knew she understood.

JILL O'BRIGHT, tenth, Naperville Comm. H. S.  
Dorothy Scroggie, teacher

### LATTER-DAY LEAR

The first time I saw him I came into the living room of our apartment, and he was sitting in a big arm-chair by the window looking across the street at Lincoln Park and the Lagoon. He was a distinguished looking gentleman in his eighties, with a white goatee and, on his left hand, a heavy gold ring with a large, brilliant diamond in it. He was my great-grandfather, my mother's grandfather. He had once been wealthy, a millionaire, but he had lost almost all his money and had been forced to come to Chicago from Philadelphia to live with us.

## I

His early life had run a little along the pattern of an Horatio Alger story. Born in New Jersey during the Civil War, he had been apprenticed to a shoemaker at the age of twelve. He had hated the drudgery of shoemaking and, before long, had run away to Philadelphia where he had found a job in a factory which made women's straw hats. Here he had worked hard, gradually moving ahead until when he was twenty and holding a position of some responsibility, the owner of the factory ran away with the fore-lady, taking most of the firm's resources and leaving it deep in debt. My great-grandfather had then taken over the operation of the factory.

One day while he was sitting in his office, there was a knock at the door. In answer to his, "Come in," two men entered, one a short, dumpy person with a gold-headed walking stick, spats, and a pompous air, a thread and cloth manufacturer named J. P. James by whom the factory had been supplied. The other, a Mr. Burns, was a tall, heavy, thick-set, muscular man, conservatively dressed. This man had supplied the factory with straw for the hats it had turned out for many years.

Mr. James spoke first. "Good morning, Mr. Shaw. I'll get right to the point. This firm is deep in debt to us. You know that, I'm sure."

"Yes," answered my great-grandfather. "I do."

"But I'm not here to ask for immediate payment," Mr. James went on. "Mr. Burns and I have been discussing this whole situation and we've come to a conclusion. We think you're a bright young man with your feet on the ground. We think you're honest. And we believe you're the man to pull this company out of the red."

My great-grandfather, never a man of many words, nodded and replied, "That is a great compliment, Mr. James."

"The point is, Shaw, we want you to assume full control of operations here, pick your own staff and try to get this business back on its feet."

Mr. Burns nodded gravely at this point, as if to add his stamp of approval to what Mr. James was saying. And he nodded again as Mr. James continued, "We'll give you practically unlimited credit and time to repay us and supply you with everything you need to get back into operation. What do you say, Shaw?"

My great-grandfather hesitated a moment. Finally, he answered, "I appreciate your confidence in me, Gentlemen. I shall do everything in my power to prove that I am deserving of it."

## II

Life had gone well for Charlie Shaw. He was nearing forty-five, was in good health, had married a tall, handsome young woman who had been a good wife and mother, and now he had six children ranging in age from seventeen to eight. The older boys, Howard, 17; Bruce, 15; and Tom, 14; were in expensive and fashionable prep schools. They were a little lazy and never did anything very constructive, but boys were boys, and Charlie wanted them to have the advantages and good times he hadn't had as a boy. After they graduated from college, they were to enter the business with their father, and Charlie, Jr., the youngest, too, when he grew up. The girls, Jean and Agnes, would go to the right schools and marry the right people and be happy, he knew.

The factory, Shaw & Company, was prospering. Women's straw hats had never been more in demand, and Charlie had paid off his debts long ago. He was making money and was worth well over a million dollars.

Moving to a small hamlet named Norwood, a few miles from Philadelphia, Charles Shaw started to dabble in real estate, buying up land, building houses, putting in sewers. He built a town and became, naturally, the wealthiest, most influential person in that town. He built a large and beautiful home for his own family, with spacious, well-cared-for grounds around it, and employed servants to care for the house and grounds. The Shaws were the first family to own a Victrola. The Shaws drove the first Pierce-Arrow in Delaware County.

This, clearly, was living.

## III

Charlie Shaw was sixty-five. Life, now, was not so good. It wasn't bad but, nevertheless, not good. When his boys were young, he had broken his knee-cap playing baseball with them. It had not mended right and his leg had been amputated above the knee. Few people realized that he had worn an artificial leg for many years. The only indication had been a slight limp and a handsome, thornwood cane. But, now, he was leaning more heavily on his cane. And he was pre-occupied.

It was at that time, in the early twenties, that the vogue for straw hats had suddenly gone out. Women wore only felt ones, winter and summer. He could have closed the factory and lived comfortably and well for the rest of his life on the money he had. But, if he did that, what of the boys, his sons? They all had

executive jobs in the factory and were drawing executive salaries. What would they do if he closed down? So Shaw & Company kept its doors open and Charles Shaw kept pouring his fortune into the business, hoping that this trend away from women's straw hats would end before too many years and that business would be booming again.

#### IV

Charlie Shaw was almost eighty-five, and life was definitely not good. His wife and his elder daughter, Jean, who had loved him so dearly, were dead. He had been forced to close the factory, years before, and let the boys go. He had paid one hundred cents on every dollar he owed and was proud of that, but it had taken almost all of his money. After his wife's death and the demise of the factory, the boys had persuaded him to sell his home and sink the money from that, together with the few thousand dollars cash he had left, into abortive business ventures for them.

He put most of his money into Glen Loch Inn, a small hotel venture for his son Howard. In return for this, he was to make his home for the rest of his life with Howard. But Howard was drinking too much and, after an argument, Howard ordered his father to leave and not to return.

From Howard's home he went to Tom's for a while and put the last of his cash into a business for him. When that failed, Tom's wife suddenly decided that the house was too small for him to remain with them.

When Agnes suggested that he live with her, he felt that, at last, he was wanted, even though he had nothing left—nothing but a very small monthly income from a trust set up for him by his wife who realized that he couldn't say "No" to his boys and who had wanted to make sure that he would never be completely penniless. He paid Agnes what he could out of his small income and, for a while, was serene and happy as an old man can be. But, then, Agnes took offense at something he did or said and told him she could no longer have him there, that the only solution was for him to go to an old man's home. He said little and agreed to go. What could he say?

My mother's mother was Jean. She would have wanted her father to make his home with her. But she was dead, remember. So my mother, hearing of the plan to put him in a home and knowing how deeply this would hurt him, invited him to pull up stakes in and around Philadelphia and come to Chicago to live with us. It wasn't easy for him, at the age of eighty-five, to leave every-

thing he had known. But he came and never went back until he died and was taken back to be buried beside my great-grandmother. He would have liked to have gone back just for a short visit to one of his children, now and then. In fact, he suggested it, wrote a letter to Bruce to ask if it would be convenient. We tried to tell him that the letter must have gone astray when he didn't get any answer from Bruce. He tried to believe that, but he didn't. He knew that people are afraid to have an old man with an artificial leg come to visit for fear he might fall and injure himself so he couldn't leave.

## V

And so this is why my great-grandfather, Charles Lincoln Shaw, lived out the last years of his life sitting in the window looking out over Lincoln Park, never making demands of any kind, *too* careful not to be a "bother," always fending for himself if he possibly could. And this is why he left his diamond ring, his last vestige of grandeur and the only thing he had to leave, to my mother. We loved him and he loved us but we couldn't erase the hurt, hard as he tried to pretend we had. He was an exile from his own children, and his only sin was giving them all he had.

KIT VERNON, tenth, Evanston Twp. H. S.  
Mary Jane Richeimer, teacher

**HONORABLE MENTION**

Arlington Heights, Arlington: "The Tricks of the Trade" by Caroline Neas (Virginia Harrod).

Berwyn, Morton West: "My Family Is Like That" by Kenneth Koubek.

Bloomington, Trinity: "Just Spring Rain" by Judy Neuheisel (Sister M. Janet, O.P.).

Champaign: "When Winter Comes . . ." by Greg Rexroad (William Southard).

Chicago, Hyde Park: "The Lost Summer" by Meredith Darby, "Pick-Up" by Andria Eiger, "The Pulse of the News" by Judy Price, "Birthday Party" by Edward Sittler (Robert Weitzel); "Begin and Cease and Then Begin Again" by Mary Simons (Sheldon Patinkin) North Park College Academy: "I Predict That . . ." by Mary Schoeneberger (Marion Olson) Senn: "Daniel Boone and Security" by Earl Thompson, "Enriching Life" by Diana Yamada (Grace Lindahl).

Elgin: "The Silence of Old Age" by Bonnie Morrison (Enid Burns).

Evanston: "Lasting Beauty" by Diane Bosley (Mary Jane Richeimer); "The Do-It-Yourself Girl" by Linda Hightower (Edith Baumann); "World of Silence" by John Brauer, "Play Production *En Masse*" by Sam Rush (Ned Hoopes); "Legend of Faith" by Joan Poyner, "See Santa Seventh Floor" by John Schmidt (Barbara Pannwitt).

Decatur, Eisenhower: "One Leaf" by Kay Hensley (Helen Hunsinger) MacArthur: "A Baby in the House" by Marilee Logan (Sibyl Garrison).

Des Plaines, Maine West: "Smiling at Medusa" by Ruth Gembecki (Anne Lauterbach).

Glen Ellyn, Glenbard: "A Lot of Poor, Mixed-up People" by Larry Klepp, "Love" by Robert Rosenthal (Grace Carlson); "Political Menagerie" by Carol Simons (Helen McConnell).

Jacksonville: "Old Man at the Bridge" by Christie Elliott, "From Reality to the Stars in *Walden*" by Don Jolly (Maurine Self).

Normal, University: "Sleep No More" by Virginia Werts (Ruth Stroud).

Olney, East Richland: "My Jazz Education" by Linda Brummett; "Look Homeward Angel" by Tom Singley (Margaret Griffin).

Ottawa: "Winter on the Farm" by Tom Reynolds (Keith Clark).

Rockford, East: "I Like to Dream" by Betsy Gibbs (Jeanne Claeys); West: "Commnad Performance" by Bruce Espy (Maud Weinschenk).

Urbana: "Johnny Wilson" by Don Spencer (Evelyn Burgett).



